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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4026
INFO RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 1046
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RUEHUM/AMEMBASSY ULAANBAATAR PRIORITY 0007
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA/DSCA// PRIORITY
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 002545

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/16/2022
TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETTC](#) [MARR](#) [KNNP](#) [IZ](#) [CY](#) [MO](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: TURKEY REMAINS CONCERNED ABOUT IRAQ-BOUND MILITARY CARGO

REF: A. STATE 108929

[1](#)B. 10/13 GOODMAN-SIEBENTRITT E-MAIL

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

[1](#)1. (U) Action Request at para 8.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary: Foreign Ministry officials have requested re-confirmation of the bonafides of a shipment of military equipment aboard the MV Slavyanin, currently being transloaded to Mongolian-flagged "Onyx" in Limassol, and destined for Iraq. Absent confirmation of bonafides, GOT may shadow or even seek permission to board the Onyx before its arrival in Iraq. Turkish suspicions are based on Iraqi government's reported inability to clarify the destination of the shipment, which Turks also believe may carry anti-tank missiles and machine guns in addition to BMP armored vehicles. MFA believes weapons could fall into the hands of the PKK. End Summary.

[1](#)3. (C) MFA Deputy Director General for Aviation and Maritime Affairs Basat Ozturk and DDG for Security Affairs Sakir Torunlar convoked Pol-Mil Counselor October 13 to discuss their concerns regarding the MV Slavyanin, with a cargo of BMP armored vehicles and associated equipment reportedly destined for Iraqi security forces, currently docked in Limassol for repairs. The officials said Turkish intelligence indicated the cargo was being transloaded to the Mongolian-flagged "Onyx" for onward shipment to the port of Um Qasr.

[1](#)4. (C) Ozturk and Torunlar said the Iraqi government had been unable to confirm the bonafides of the cargo or confirm its ultimate destination. The GOT fears that the military cargo, or parts of it, could fall into the hands of the terrorist PKK organization, although the officials admitted they had no direct intelligence in that regard. The Turkish ambassador in Ulaabaatar had asked the Mongolian government about the shipment and had received the reply that the USG had ordered it to be transloaded onto the Onyx for shipment to Um Qasr. The Mongolians claimed the shipment belonged to the "US State Department."

[1](#)5. (C) Ozturk and Torunlar stated that, based on the lack of clarity on the part of the Mongolian and Iraqi governments, and the circuitous route of the MV Slavyanin before putting in to Limassol for repairs, the GOT remains suspicious of the

shipment's bonafides. They also stated their concern that the cargo manifest suggests that, in addition to BMP armored vehicles, the cargo includes AT-4 antitank missiles, machine guns and ammunition -- all of which could be diverted to terrorists. Ozturk said that the GOT is considering all options for dealing with the ship, including shadowing it on its way to the Suez Canal. He stated that the Turkish Navy would consider boarding the vessel, but only with permission.

¶6. (C) The Turkish officials stated that either the USG or the GOI could allay Turkish suspicions by officially confirming the bonafides of the shipment and destination. They recommended that the Onyx be required to remain in Limassol until the GOT receives sufficient assurances.

¶7. (C) We referred to our discussions in August (ref a) and deployed points provided ref b, stating our intention to work closely with Turkey on the security of shipments in the region, encouraging Turkey not to seek to board the vessel without providing evidence of an illegal cargo or diversion, and promising to address Turkish concerns about the shipment.

¶8. (C) Action Request: Post requests detailed information that will respond to Turkish concerns about the legitimate nature of this shipment and its destination.

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